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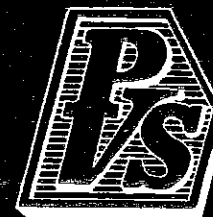
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Pig Veterinary Society

THE CASUALTY PIG

REVISED 1996

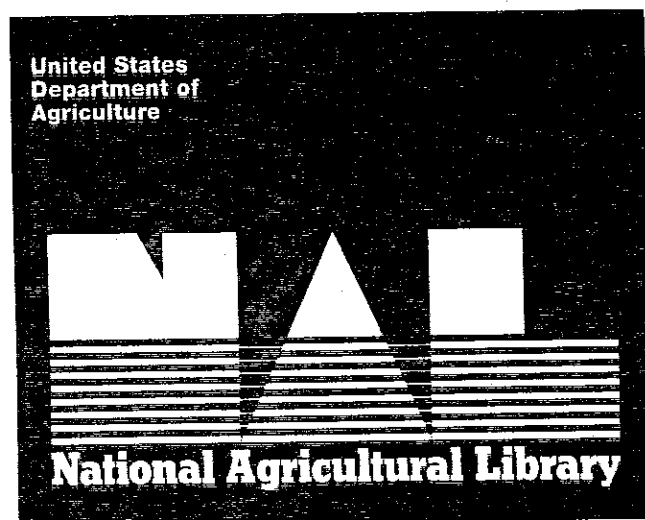


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Prepared for the Pig Veterinary Society
by P W Blackburn BVSc MRCVS

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THE CASUALTY PIG

INTRODUCTION

It is inevitable that on every pig farm some animals will become sick or injured and have to be treated as "casualties". The treatment of a casualty pig is in the hands of the producer and he should be influenced not only by economics, but also by welfare and public health considerations. The official view, which is supported by the Pig Veterinary Society, is that the animal's welfare should always be the first consideration.

The despatch of a casualty pig to, and its acceptance by an abattoir, is governed by The Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995. These require an Owner's Written Declaration (Reg 17 (2) (a) Schedule 18) (see page 18) must accompany any animal which is known to be, or is suspected of being, diseased or injured at the time it is consigned to a slaughterhouse. In addition, The Transit of Animals (Road and Rail Order) 1975, Article 11, prohibits the carriage of unfit animals if this is likely to cause them unnecessary suffering.

Under this legislation, the owner and the person in charge have a joint responsibility for the correct disposal of casualty animals. For example, it is illegal to load a lame sow onto a haulier's wagon and transport it a long way simply to get the best price. If salvage is not intended, or it is impractical, casualties should always be killed on the farm. On no account may any casualty be disposed of through a livestock market. Slaughterhouses are generally unwilling to accept for salvage casualty pigs that have been killed on the farm, and it follows that pigs which are unfit to be transported must be regarded as unfit for salvage. If a slaughterhouse will accept the carcass of a pig slaughtered on the farm it must be accompanied by a certificate completed by the veterinary surgeon (Schedule 19 regulation 18 (2) (e)) and this certificate is valid for 6 hours during which time the slaughter of the animal must be carried out by a competent slaughterman. If this period is exceeded a further certificate will be required.

When a casualty animal is being transported it must be penned separately from other stock on the lorry and be supplied with deep bedding. It should be taken to the nearest suitable slaughterhouse and prior arrangement should have been made so that the animal can be slaughtered without undue delay.

A casualty pig which is kept on the farm for treatment should be isolated in a warm, well-bedded pen, with food, and especially water, readily available. **The withdrawal period for any medicines administered must be allowed to elapse before the animal can be sold or supplied for slaughter.** Records of all medicines purchased and used are required under The Animals Meat and Meat Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations 1992 (Reg. 20, Schedule 2)

In brief, when making a decision on the correct action to take with a casualty pig you should consider:-

1. Is the pig fit to travel? (Welfare). If the answer is 'Yes' – then
2. Will the carcass be fit for human consumption? (Public Health).
If the answer to either 1. or 2. is 'No' – then
3. Is the animal suitable for treatment or should it be destroyed on the farm on humane grounds?

For the pigs' welfare it is important that the decisions are taken as quickly as possible.

The final decision will depend on the methods of disposal available, which will be different for each farm, and on the availability of slaughterhouse services. For example, a pig which becomes a casualty during the day and mid-week may be suitable for casualty slaughter, but the same pig which becomes a casualty at the weekend, when the slaughterhouse is closed, may have to be destroyed on the farm.

There is a page at the end of the booklet in which you can record the names and addresses of your veterinary surgeon and knacker and the address and working hours of the nearest slaughterhouse.

REASONS FOR CASUALTY SLAUGHTER

There are comparatively few conditions that render a pig suitable for casualty slaughter, requiring an Owner's Written Declaration. There are many for which pigs can be treated and slaughtered normally later. There are others which make pigs unsuitable for presentation to a slaughterhouse, either because welfare considerations prevent them from being transported, or because the condition would render the carcass unfit for human consumption.

The following list presents the more common reasons for considering the casualty slaughter of a pig, and provides guidelines for the possible action to be taken in each case. Often alternative courses of action are suggested and the final decision will depend on the circumstances and on the condition of the individual pig. There are four basic courses of action, which are defined as follows:-

DESTROY The on-farm humane destruction of the pig where, for welfare reasons, it is unfit to be transported alive. It should be carried out without undue delay.

This includes when on-farm slaughter for human consumption is practical.

TREAT Give suitable treatment with veterinary advice and review progress after five days; if the pig responds keep it to sell; if it does not respond, destroy it humanely.

CASUALTY SLAUGHTER The animal may be suitable for transport and slaughter in the nearest appropriate slaughterhouse. It must be accompanied by an Owner's Written Declaration.

SELL Normal slaughter or sale through other normal outlets, as appropriate.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE ARE GUIDELINES ONLY AND IN ANY QUESTION OF DOUBT YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR VETERINARY SURGEON

SOWS**CONDITIONS****ACTION****1. PROLAPSE****1.1 UTERUS****1. TREAT IMMEDIATELY**or **2. DESTROY****1.2 VAGINA****1. CASUALTY SLAUGHTER**or **2. TREAT** for very recent undamaged prolapses then sell as soon as possible.**1.3 RECTUM****1. CASUALTY SLAUGHTER**or **2. TREAT** for very recent undamaged prolapses then sell as soon as possible.**2. OPEN WOUNDS****2.1 TRAUMATIC INJURIES
CUTS AND WOUNDS****SEVERE:****DESTROY****NOT SEVERE:****TREAT** then sell when healed.**2.2. SHOULDER SORES/
ULCERATED HOCKS:****TREAT** and move to bedded area. Then sell when healed.**SOWS****CONDITIONS****ACTION****3. LAMENESS****3.1 OFF BACK LEGS****DESTROY****3.2 ACUTELY LAME**

eg. swollen infected joints

SEVERE:**DESTROY****NOT SEVERE:****TREAT****3.3 LAME WITH NO OBVIOUS
CAUSE**

No open wounds or gross swelling and no temperatures

NOT SEVERE:**CASUALTY SLAUGHTER** provided the pig can bear weight on all 4 legs and is willing to walk unaided and without being forced**SEVERE:****1. TREAT**or **2. DESTROY****4. EMACIATED,
SCORE 1 RIBS VISIBLE****DESTROY****5. DYSTOCIA
(Difficult farrowing)****1. TREAT** then review and retain only if sow expels pigs and recovers.**NB** If live pigs are present, consider on-farm hysterectomy.or **2. DESTROY****NB** Never send a sow with retained piglets for slaughter; it will be condemned.

GROWING AND FINISHING PIGS**CONDITION ACTION****1. LAMENESS****1.1 OFF BACK LEGS DESTROY****1.2 ACUTELY LAME**
eg. swollen infected joints**SEVERE: DESTROY****NOT SEVERE: TREAT****1.3 LAME WITH NO OBVIOUS CAUSE**

No open wounds or gross swelling and no temperature

NOT SEVERE:
CASUALTY SLAUGHTER
provided the pig can bear weight on all 4 legs and is willing to walk unaided and without being forced.**SEVERE: 1. TREAT****or 2. DESTROY****1.4 SEVERELY DAMAGED CLAW****1. CASUALTY SLAUGHTER****or 2. TREAT****1.5 RECENTLY BROKEN LEGS:****SEVERE SPRAINS AND DISLOCATIONS****DESTROY****GROWING AND FINISHING PIGS****CONDITION ACTION****2. INJURIES****2.1 TAIL-BITTEN**

(a) at least 1" of normal tail with no swelling or open wound:

SELL

(b) swollen with or without open wound:

TREAT

(c) no tail with open wound:

DESTROY**2.2 SEVERE TRAUMATIC INJURIES:**

e.g. recent open wound

1. DESTROY**or 2. CASUALTY SLAUGHTER****or 3. TREAT****2.3 EAR-BITTEN, FLANK BITTEN OTHER RECENT WOUNDS:****TREAT****2.4 BEATEN-UP PIGS WITH NUMEROUS SUPERFICIAL SKIN WOUNDS:****TREAT**

It is essential that these cases are isolated immediately and during Treatment.

GROWING AND FINISHING PIGS

CONDITION

ACTION

3. RECTAL PROLAPSE

3.1 RECENT UNDAMAGED: **TREAT** then retain and **SELL** for normal slaughter at lowest possible weight.

3.2 OTHERS: **1. CASUALTY SLAUGHTER** if suitable weight.

or **2. DESTROY**

4. RUPTURES

4.1 SMALL: **SELL** for normal slaughter.

4.2 LARGE: **SELL** for normal slaughter at lowest possible weight. Casualty transport conditions should apply.

4.3 LARGE WITH ULCERATED SKIN:

MILD: **CASUALTY SLAUGHTER**

SEVERE: **DESTROY**

5. GREASY PIG DISEASE: **TREAT**

6. PITYRIASIS ROSEA: **1. NO TREATMENT. SELL** as normal pig when recovered.

or **2. CASUALTY SLAUGHTER** if skin lesions still present at slaughter weight.

7. RUNTS AND AILING PIGS

MILD: **TREAT**

SEVERE: **DESTROY**

8. RECTAL STRICTURES: **DESTROY**

THE HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF PIGS ON THE FARM

A pig may be killed humanely on the farm by using a suitable firearm provided that the person involved (whether it is the veterinary surgeon, a licensed slaughterman or the owner or stockman) is familiar with the instrument to be used and holds a valid firearms certificate. All firearms, including captive bolt pistols, require a firearms certificate. Your veterinary surgeon may be able to support your application to the police for a firearms certificate.

However, there are circumstances in which shooting may be either undesirable or dangerous, for example, when a sow is wedged in a stall, and under these circumstances it may be necessary to ask your veterinary surgeon to kill the pig humanely with an overdose of an anaesthetic. A pig killed in this way cannot be used for human or animal consumption, and the disposal of its carcass presents special problems.

Any method of killing a pig humanely must ensure that the pig becomes unconscious very quickly and remains unconscious until it is dead, that the pig is not handled roughly or frightened before it is killed and that the method does not endanger human life.

The method to be used will depend on the size of the pig, where it is to be killed and whether it is to be killed by the veterinary surgeon or the farmer or stockman.

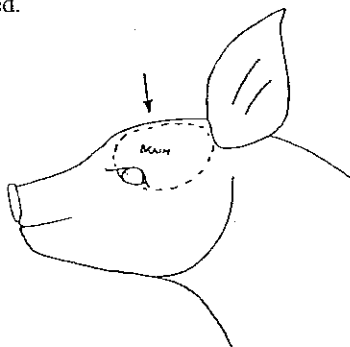
The following descriptions are intended as guidelines only. Please discuss them with your veterinary surgeon.

For any of the methods to be used successfully, it is essential that the operator is not nervous and is confident that he can kill the pig quickly and humanely. He should be unhurried, gentle and patient. For all methods involving shooting, the pig should first be restrained with a wire noose or rope around its upper jaw, with the person holding the rope standing in front of the pig and the operator behind the operator. This procedure minimises the risk of an accident and ensures that the operation is done efficiently.

THE HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF PIGS ON THE FARM

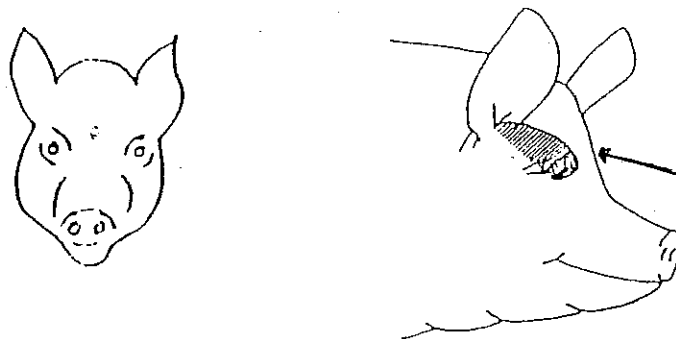
(a) EXTERNAL TRAUMA

A sharp firm blow with a heavy, blunt instrument on the top of the head, over the brain, is an efficient way of humanely killing pigs less than three weeks of age. It is essential that the blow is administered swiftly, firmly and with absolute determination. If there is any doubt whether the pig is dead, the blow should be repeated.



(b) CAPTIVE BOLT PISTOL

The site of shooting is on the mid-line of the forehead, one finger's width above eye level, and the muzzle of the pistol should be placed against the head and directed towards the brain.



It is important that the cartridge used should be powerful enough to stun the largest pig on the unit.

THE HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF PIGS ON THE FARM

On breeding units it is recommended that the Cash Special Captive Bolt Pistol is used with a 0.22 3 gr Green cartridge.

On fattening units it is recommended that either the Cash Special Captive Bolt Pistol is used with a 0.22 3 gr Green cartridge, or the Cox Universal Human Stunner is used with a 0.22 2.3 gr Green cartridge.

Using the right calibre captive bolt is an effective way to stun all pigs and may kill outright pigs up to 24 weeks of age. However, it will only stun adult pigs. After the pig has been stunned it should be either pithed (a process requiring considerable skill) or bled out. In practice, all pigs stunned with a captive bolt pistol should be bled by means of a deep cut across the throat from ear to ear with a sharp knife, to sever all the major blood vessels. **This process does not necessarily render the carcass fit for human consumption.**

(c) FREE BULLET HUMANE KILLER

The site of shooting is the same as for the captive bolt humane pistol. It discharges a single, high velocity soft-nosed bullet and will kill all ages of pig.

It is very important to ensure that if the bullet should pass out of the pig's body it will not ricochet off concrete floors or walls. For this reason, the free bullet humane killer is not recommended for use in buildings, and under normal circumstances it should be used only by a veterinary surgeon or a knackermaster. Others present must stay behind the operator when the pig is shot.

(d) 0.22 RIFLE

The site of shooting is the same as for the humane killer, but the muzzle of the rifle should be held between 5 and 25cm (2 to 10 inches) away from the head.

A 0.22 rifle is suitable only for pigs up to 24 weeks of age. The bullet is small and it is important that it is used accurately, but the length of the barrel makes it difficult to achieve the right angle of entry. The precautions taken with the free bullet humane killer should be applied to the 0.22 rifle.

This is not recommended for use except in extreme emergency.

THE HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF PIGS ON THE FARM

(e) 12-BORE SHOTGUN

The site of shooting is either the same as for the 0.22 rifle, or through an eye or from behind an ear, pointing in the direction of the brain. In each case the muzzle of the gun should be held between 5 and 25cm (2 to 10 inches) away from the head.

On farms where a man is competent in the use of a 12-bore shotgun, this is probably the ideal way to destroy any pig humanely. It does not blow the pig's head off but makes a small round hole in the skull and destroys the brain and shatters the bones of the skull. The pig looks almost normal except for the site of entry of the shot.

The danger from the ricochet of shotgun pellets is much less than the danger from a single bullet.

(f) 410 SHOTGUN

A 410 shotgun can be used in the same way as a 12-bore shotgun for pigs up to 24 weeks old. It should not be used for adult pigs.

APPENDIX

GENERAL RULES FOR THE SAFE USE OF FIREARMS

1. Farmers who are competent handlers of a 12-bore shotgun should seek instruction from their veterinary surgeon on its use as a humane killer, but where it is not available, and particularly on large units staffed by young personnel, it is better to purchase and then get instruction on the use of a captive bolt pistol.
2. Never point any gun, loaded or unloaded, at anything you do not intend to shoot.
3. Always treat every gun as if it were loaded.
4. Get instruction from a trained firearms instructor before using any gun.
5. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are aiming at the target.
6. Be certain the gun is unloaded before cleaning it, and always clean it after use.
7. Always unload the gun before entering a place where there are people.
8. Never leave any gun unattended.
9. Store guns and ammunition locked away separately and out of reach of children.
10. Before you shoot be sure your backstop is safe and there is nobody in range.
11. Guns and alcohol or drugs do not mix.
12. Never pull a gun towards you by the muzzle.
13. Do not climb a tree or cross a fence while carrying a loaded gun.
14. Load and unload with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction.
15. If a gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, keep it pointed at the target for at least 30 seconds. Sometimes slow primary ignition will cause hang-fire and the cartridge will go off after a short pause.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE SAFE USE OF FIREARMS

16. Never put your hand over the muzzle of a gun.
17. Check that the ammunition is the right size and calibre and is not dented.
18. Never allow any firearm to point at any part of your body or at another person.
19. Always hold a pistol in the right hand and use the left hand for cocking. (Vice versa if left-handed).

OWNER'S WRITTEN DECLARATION TO ACCOMPANY AN ANIMAL FOR SLAUGHTER KNOWN OR SUSPECTED TO BE DISEASED OR INJURED.

This Declaration must include:-

- (a) Name, address and telephone number of owner/person in charge.
- (b) Name and address of owner's veterinary surgeon.
- (c) Animal species, breed, age, sex., identifying marks (eg. ear tag number).

Within the last 28 days the above animal has:-

* (a) received no treatment; or

* (b) the withdrawal period for any treatment administered to this animal has been observed.

* Delete where appropriate

- (d) Describe the signs of disease or injury the animal has shown or, if a veterinary surgeon has seen the animal, his diagnosis.
- (e) this must then be signed by the owner or person in charge with the time and date.

Copies of Owners' Declaration forms may be obtained from your veterinary surgeon

CONTACT POINTS

VETERINARY SURGEON

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

NEAREST SUITABLE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Name:

Address:

Distance from Farm:

Operating Hours throughout the Week:

Telephone Number:

KNACKERMAN

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

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